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ABSTRACT

In the fall of 1973, questionnaires concerning their professional relationships and goals were sent to 456 school media specialists in the southeastern United States. Responses were received from 66% of those surveyed. The major conclusions derived from the survey were the following: (1) there is a trend toward central locations for school media centers, (2) media specialists are frequently asked to perform extraneous administrative duties, (3) the media specialist needs to solicit teacher patronage and suggestions, (4) specific university training for media work is needed, and (5) the function and use of the media center has improved. (PF)

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LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

BACKGROUND

In a country that invents jargon as fast as its technology---there are often lags in terminologies between the practitioner and the theorizer. It seems that the terminologies have evolved before the philosophy behind the words has been thoroughly thought through. The results have been a confusing, misleading, and often fallacious bandying about of pedagogical terms, especially the terms related to school media programs.

A DEFINITION

The province of media must first be functionally defined in order to clarify its objectives and techniques. Without a generally accepted and workable definition, jargon directed toward media is often weakened in purpose and becomes vague in meaning. A question on definition would ask, what constitutes a well-ground school media program? A school media program can be defined as that function which is concerned with the design, development, and analysis of instructional systems through the effective use of the most appropriate materials, both print and nonprint and the accompanying technologies. It includes the selection, organization and evaluation of instructional media.

Confusion about terms like educational media, instructional media and library media have compounded the problems of definition and purpose. Erickson notes:

> Instructional media is a somewhat more specific expression than educational media, connoting formal systematic application to pedagogy.

For a point in clarity of meaning, a description of the functions of school media centers and the analysis of tasks performed by its professional personnel

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determines if a school media program is indeed in operation.

The evolving notion of the school media program has been an instance of a significant concept undermined by haste and expediency. The concept suggests a cross-disciplinary approach, bringing into confluence related areas such as information services and communication theories and processes. Media utilization suggest an interdisciplinary approach toward effective utilization of instructional methodologies and technologies: selecting, storing, organizing, coordinating, and implementing print and nonprint resources. Librarianship, instructional technology, and programs directed toward effective media utilization have similar functions, but also present some differences. For instance, Landau defines librarianship as:

> the collection, preservation, organization and use of recorded information.

This definition continues to focus on library science as a management function: maintaining tenantry in the selecting, acquisitioning, classifying, cataloging, storing, and circulating of bibliographic materials. Morris describes instructional media as:

> Those things which are manipulated, seen, heard, or talked about, plus the instruments which facilitate such activity.

Historically, and even in many instances today, instructional media is assumed to be all media exclusive of the print medium. The instructional media field continues to be defined in terms of a "thing" orientation: placing emphasis on nonprint materials and educational hardware. Only in the past few years has media talk begun to place less emphasis on controlling materials and manipulating "things" and to bring into focus efforts to support and complement the learning

process.

Gerlach and Ely, in their introductory remarks charges that the school media specialist is emerging into a director, a facilitator, and expediter of instructional activities. They sustain this description by noting that school media specialists are in an advantageous position in that they can call upon a wide spectrum of resources to provide the conditions which assist learners to meet their objectives.

While functional school media programs retains close ties with both areas of librarianship and educational media, media programs take their directions from new and distinct ways of thinking about teaching. The school media specialist is more fundamentally and actively involved in the development of school program than are some of the more "traditional" media personnel. An official policy statement of the American Association of School Librarians extended the scope and purpose of unified school media programs:

> The philosophy of a unified program of audiovisual and printed services and resources in the individual school is one that has continuously grown and been strengthened. The fusion of media resources and services provides optimum programs and services for students and teachers.

NEW TRENDS AND SPECIALIZATIONS

It is a fallacy to assume that merely fusing two or more disciplines (e.g., librarianship and instructional technology) will create a totally new and different media mission. In fact, the welding of these two disciplines has done little more than to bring these two distinct functions into closer physical proximity. The fallacy is compounded when these two disciplines are brought together within the

same department while these two separate divisions continue to perpetuate and support their own particular and favored area.

Insert Figure #1

Figure #1 does indeed form a distinct specialization... a newer conceptual approach. In other words, a school media program not only draws upon the knowledges, skills, and techniques of the school librarian, the curriculum specialist, the educational media specialist, and so on, but creates a synergistic effect---producing a new and distinct specialists.

It cannot be over-emphasized that the several fields, indicated in this Figure, do not constitute a school media program. The mere bringing together, physically and administratively will not in itself provide the basis for an effective and efficient school media operation. The development of such a program requires a instructional team effort---a formulation of theories and practices directed toward unifying a school's instructional effort.

The major competencies, indicated in Figure #1, coalesce into a new and different activity. An activity that focuses upon the school media concept: a concept that begins to develop its own body of knowledges, competencies and skills. It is through unifying these competencies that requires new and distinct tasks; causes new performances to be analyzed and validated; and conceptually and operationally establishes a school media operation as a separate and distinct activity.

The school media specialist utilizes both print and nonprint resources and implements these resources into the informational requirements and needs of student users. School media specialists views themselves as integral components

of the instructional team: bringing into play an array of instructional materials that enrich and broaden the instructional process.

Dale has viewed media utilization as a major force for improving the instructional delivery system of school media centers. He states:

> Instruction is the purposeful, orderly controlled sequencing of experiences to reach a specified educational goal. Media instrumentation includes the transmission system (the materials and devices) available for carrying selected messages. In short, instruction uses facts and principles to achieve instructional purposes through varied media.

The school media concept a mission, it is a professional posture which is an outgrowth of faculty dialogue: the sharing of ideas, interests, and concepts. It has an advantage of incorporating faculty accepted goals and objectives, and integrating many media resource forms into a comprehensive and developmental school media program. Never before, in the history of mankind, has there been as many new trends and innovations in the area of education, in educational research, in information and communication research, in curriculum planning, in developing alternatives for instructional delivery, in the use of multi-media and the cross-media and inter-disciplinary approach to curriculum implementation. Research has also provided educators with taxonomies of learning, in systems development, and in the selection and evaluation of media resources.

Like other disciplines, media is becoming increasingly complicated by the vast increases in knowledge innudating our scientific, social, technological, economic, and political communities. The impact of these changes demands a careful and continuing reappraisal of instructional practices and a recognition of the involvement that school media centers are playing in instructional planning and support roles.

To grow--in fact, to survive--an academic discipline demands self-discipline of its practitioners. A discipline based on fallacies, feeble definitions, misinterpretations, unreliable and precarious theories, and principles will soon lose its vitality. To judge from the expressions of many school systems' administrators, there seems little question that school media specialists are badly needed. Whether these needs will be met depends on the leadership and abilities of contemporary media professionals, both practitioners and theorists, to clarify their goals, purposes, and programs.

In order to determine the state-of-the-art of school media programs, a Study* that would assess and then ascertain present conditions was planned, executed, and the final results analyzed and interpreted. The purposes of this study were to assess the opinions, professional relationships, and missions of school media specialists (N=301) employed throughout the southeastern United States (Florida, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Mississippi).

The criteria for selecting school media specialists (SMS) for this Study were:

1. The location of the school districts within the geographical configuration of each of the six states (northern, eastern, southern, western, or central sections).

2. The Average Daily Membership (ADM) of students enrolled in the school districts.

The data for selecting school media specialists (respondents) by location and ADM was based on:

1. Patterson's American Education. 1971-72 ed., Vol. XLVII. Mount Prospect, Ill., Educational Directories, Inc.

*This study was conducted under a Title II, Part B, HEA Grant. The survey was taken during the Fall, 1973. The principal investigator, Howard G. Ball, Associate Professor; he was assisted by James Jackson and Mable Norman, graduate assistants.

2. Williams, J. W. and Sallie L. Warf. Education Directory, 1972-73 Public School Systems. DHEW Publication No. (OE) 73-11701.

Table 1 indicates the five ranges used for selecting respondents on the basis of ADM. The following are the student average daily membership ranges which were used to categorize school districts from which respondents were selected.

under - 5,000
5,000 - 9,000
10,000 - 24,999
25,000 - 49,999
50,000 - Above

Insert Table 1

This Table also presents the number of SMS surveyed by each state and the subsequent responses received. The percentages of respondents returning completed opinionnaires are displayed, by states, in the extreme right hand column of this Table.

A summary of the data in Table 1 shows that:

1. 456 school media specialists were surveyed in 6 southeastern United States.

2. 301, or 66%, responded with opinionnaires that were sufficiently completed to be used in this study.

3. The total number of SMS surveyed and the subsequent responses by states.

Insert Table 2

Table 2 specifies the number of:

1. SMS surveyed (based on ADM)

2. SMS responding (ADM)

3. Percent-to-total (ADM)

A summary of the data on this Chart indicated that the responses, by ADM extends from 58% (ADM 50,000 and above) to 70% (ADM ranges 10,000-24,999). In none of the ADM categories, but one, did the percent-to-total of the respondents fall below 60%.

Table 3 essentially profiles the percentage of respondents, by states, as related to the total number of respondents from all states surveyed. These percentages were significantly stable from state to state; based on the number of SMS who received opinionnaires as to those respondents who returned completed and useable response forms.

Insert Table 3

The Study's investigators allocated the percentage of opinionnaires to individual states on the basis of two criteria (Table 4):

Insert Table 4

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1. Total number of student enrollment of each of the six states surveyed
2. Total number of local school districts in each state

The data on which these criteria were based was obtained from:

1. The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1974 ed., New York, New York, Newspaper Enterprise Association.

Summary of Study

A summary of the data that was returned via opinionnaires (Appendix A) indicated most school media centers (90%) are centrally located within school buildings. These centers are accessible and convenient for use by students and

teachers. Nine percent of the respondents who expressed that their centers are not presently in a centralized location indicated that there are plans under way to reduce, or completely ameliorate the problem of inaccessibility.

School media specialists (SMS) pinpointed some major constraints that hinder efforts for program planning and initiating efficient user services. The responses to this item denotes that media professionals spend a significant amount of their time (27%) coordinating school funding raising activities, checking school's daily student attendance, assisting principals to perform some administrative duties related to school management, and other tasks not directly related to the programs and services of the school media centers.

After quantification of the data, it was evidenced that (65%) students and (37%) of the teachers are using the center's programs and services. Fifty-six percent of the teachers are presently using nonprint materials as an integral part of their instructional delivery system. Teachers (53%) seem apprehensive about using educational hardware that is necessary to project many of the nonprint materials (i.e., films, slides, tapes, and video formats).

Fifty-two percent of the responding SMS indicated they were unfamiliar with the 1969 Standards for School Media Programs. Of the 144 respondents who were familiar with the Standards, 134 (or 94%) replied that they do not have the recommended quantities of audiovisual equipment to adequately serve their respective schools.

Instructing teachers to use media, software and hardware, is necessary in order to increase the effective use of instructional media. Sixty-three percent of the responding SMS specified that their schools, or school districts, have a plan

for training teachers to use media. Forty-two percent of the respondents expressed that they were directly involved in an effort of inservice training; either in terms of planning and implementing the total services, or as a support person.

School media specialists evidenced concern about three major issues. These three issues incorporate 94% of the major concerns of school media specialists:

1. Lack of paraprofessional, or other supportive personnel to assist in maintaining and supporting the center's programs and services.
2. Lack of adequate physical resources to initiate and provide comprehensive media center programs and services.
3. Lack of fiscal resources to acquire the necessary media that are necessary to effectively complement and reinforce the school's instructional program.

Fifty-two percent of SMS stated that their schools' media centers possessed the necessary space, equipment, and materials for teachers to design and produce parochial instructional media.

This study evidences a major problem that must be given attention by professional media specialists; both in colleges and public school settings. That is, 37% of teaching personnel are presently using the resources of the centers. Eight-seven percent of the respondents called for colleges and universities' programs of teacher education to required preservice students to enroll in a survey course. This course would ultimately orient teachers toward a more effective utilization of the schools media centers (programs, resources, and services).

It was also pointed out that 35% of SMS expressed that they had little or no opportunity to plan with teachers. Attitudes of principals, apathy of teachers, and excessive demands on school media specialist time are given as major reasons that limits this planning task.

School media specialists and their school administrators are having positive dialog. Eighty-five percent responded their school administrators' attitudes is "good" or "satisfactory". It appears that without the support of the administratio little or no development of school media centers can be anticipated.

An average of 26% of the school media specialists' time is given to cooperat planning with teachers. This was based exclusively from those SMS (58%) who responded that they plan with teachers.

School media specialists are now being increasingly confronted with emphas of the new missions of school media programs, such as (1) developing knowledges and skills for selecting and using the appropriate media in a particular instruction plan; (2) acquiring competencies for curriculum design; (3) articulating instructi objectives with a compatable medium; (4) assisting in the design and production of instructional materials; and (5) bringing all of these into an organized and sustaini instructional system. Consequently, only 45% of the respondents felt adequately prepared to develop and maintain a comprehensive school media program incorpor ting all of the above missions into their school media programs.

Teachers of English, social studies, and reading were ranked as those who used the media center's programs and services more than other instructional areas.

Eighty-three percent of the respondents have established student orientation sessions: sessions designed to assist school students to use the programs and services of the media center.

The survey results revealed that media centers are being used so much for study hall activities. Sixty-two percent substantiated that this body holding functi is no longer a function of their centers.

Conclusions

The conclusions will be reflections and interpretations of the data gleaned from this survey.

- There seems to be a positive influence affecting the physical design of contemporary school buildings. Most media centers are located in a centralized area: assessible to students and teachers. This trend reflects an effort to design a building around a program and not vice versa.
- Although the attitude is waning, there is still a tendency for school administrators to call upon a school media specialist to assist in duties that are not related to the ongoing operations of a media center. One suggestion that might help in ameliorating this condition is that these SMS, who are performing surreptitious duties to become more actively involved in the instructional planning and developmental activities of their schools. Media specialists that demonstrate proactive professional behavior, rather than the reactive type, will possibly deepen the school administrators' appreciations of the role and function of the school's media specialist.
- Many of the current studies indicate that as more and more teachers are exposed to the school media center's operations and services, the level of utilization increases (Travers, Erickson [1972], Dale, Braun, et. al.). School media specialists must establish and maintain continuous teacher input regarding:

1. The programs and services of the center
2. Operation and manipulation of educational hardware
3. The latest acquisitions (both print and nonprint)
4. Services related to the design and construction of instructional materials

The media specialist must also offer services to students in terms of:

1. Story-telling activities
2. Assisting children to use educational technology
3. Articulating the often ill-defined and the awkwardly stated bibliographic needs of student users into a language and finally a system for locating and identifying needed media

- School media specialists must become actively involved in the social and political milieu of their communities. The SMS must demonstrate to their respective communities, their importance for helping students to achieve. The communities at large must become more aware of the media specialist's role in the instructional program. This will ultimately benefit school media programs through developing more empathetic and enlightened who will encourage elected school boards to provide the necessary human, material, and fiscal resources necessary for a comprehensive media program and services.
- There is an increasing need for higher education to unify instructional programs. Many SMS seem ill-equipped to adjust to the systems approach toward media management. Colleges and universities must:

  1. Institute programs that are directed more to what the preservice student will need in terms of competencies to perform the ongoing and real life tasks required for the successful operation of a school media center.
  2. Implement more field-oriented courses, seminars, institutes, and mini-units directed toward inservice personnel who find it difficult to return to a campus for additional formal training.

- SMS need to maintain 2-way communication between themselves and the other instructional personnel in order to continuously assess and revise their programs and services as reflected in

the changing missions and purposes of their schools.

- SMS will, at times, have to aggressively seek out teachers who might use their services and programs. It is not an effective strategy to wait for a potential user of media services to approach the media specialists. Often, the first step will have to be taken by the SMS. This does not often lessen the regard or appreciation on the part of teachers toward the media specialists but establishes an aura of mutual respect: this behavior demonstrates that the SMS is genuinely interested in assisting in instructional planning and development.
- School media specialists must constantly evaluate their center's print or nonprint collections. A specialist who orders disproportionate quantities of materials for particular content areas will reduce the effectiveness of their centers toward all areas of instruction. The school media specialist must maintain a proper balance of materials: providing a collection of media that adequately supports all programs in the school. Above all, the school media specialist must maintain a comprehensive collection of materials, with sufficient accompanying technologies, to properly display the materials. More and more, instructional missions are directed toward individualized learning and independent study. The SMS cannot continue to view the center's programs and services as adjunctive but as a very real integral part of the instructional delivery system.

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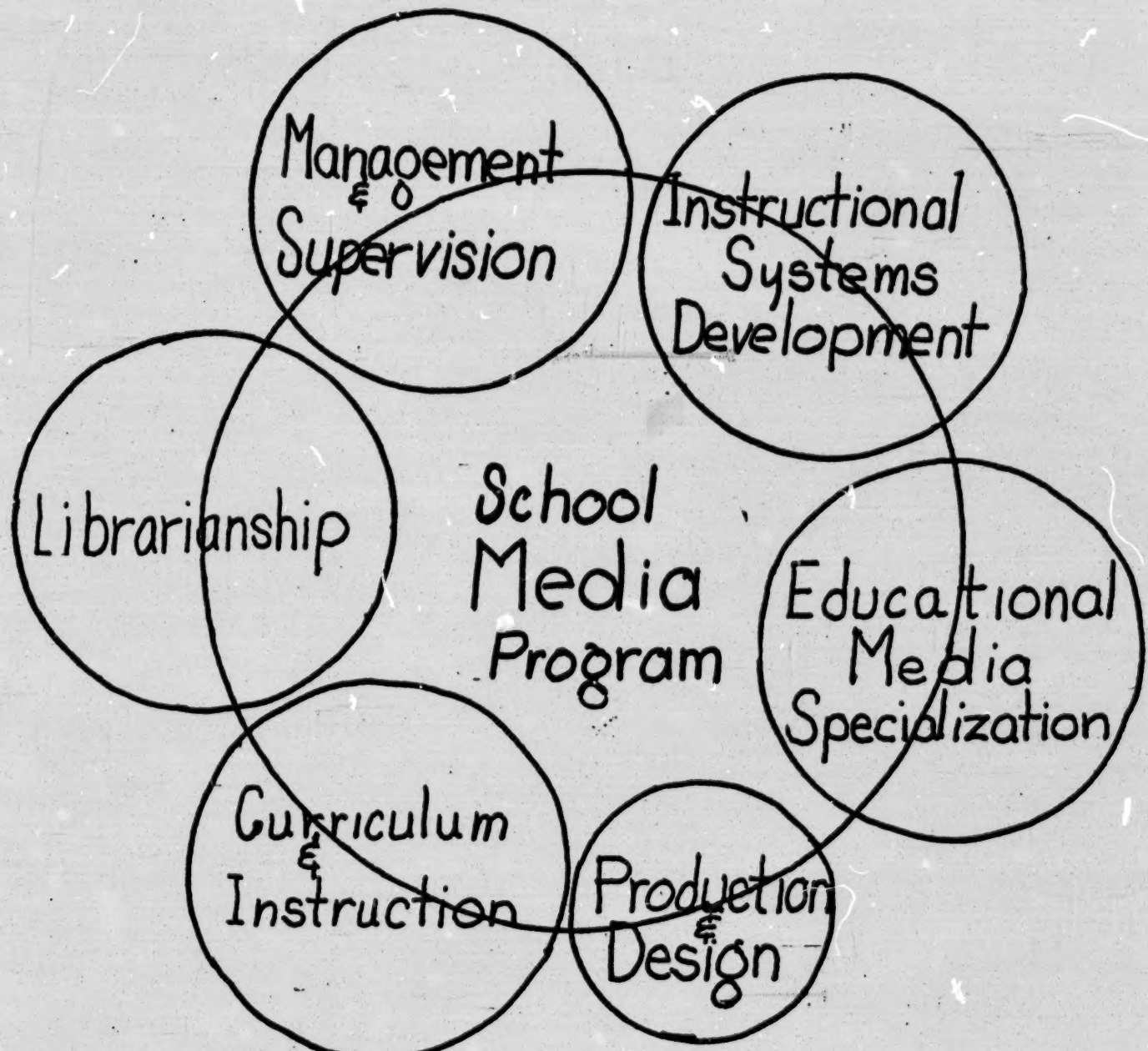
Management & Supervision
Instructional Systems Development
Librarianship
School Media Program
Educational Media Specialization
Curriculum & Instruction
Production & Design

Figure 1

Table 1

SUMMARY OF DATA BY AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP (ADM)
OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS EMPLOYING
SCHOOL MEDIA SPECIALISTS (SMS)

State	ADM	Total Number SMS Surveyed	Total Number SMS Responded	Percent-to-Total SMS Responded
FLORIDA (N = 100)	Under - 5,000	12	9	72%
	5,000 - 9,999	16	12	
	10,000 - 24,999	50	36	
	25,000 - 49,999	14	9	
	50,000 - Above	8	6	
GEORGIA (N = 97)	Under - 5,000	16	8	64%
	5,000 - 9,999	20	13	
	10,000 - 24,999	48	32	
	25,000 - 49,999	9	6	
	50,000 - Above	4	3	
ALABAMA (N = 79)	Under - 5,000	15	11	72%
	5,000 - 9,999	19	14	
	10,000 - 24,999	30	23	
	25,000 - 49,999	10	8	
	50,000 - Above	5	2	
SOUTH CAROLINA (N = 56)	Under - 5,000	6	4	63%
	5,000 - 9,999	11	6	
	10,000 - 24,999	30	19	
	25,000 - 49,999	6	5	
	50,000 - Above	4	2	
TENNESSEE (N = 67)	Under - 5,000	8	5	66%
	5,000 - 9,999	15	11	
	10,000 - 24,999	32	23	
	25,000 - 49,999	9	4	
	50,000 - Above	3	1	
MISSISSIPPI (N = 57)	Under - 5,000	10	6	50%
	5,000 - 9,999	15	8	
	10,000 - 24,999	22	11	
	25,000 - 49,999	10	4	
	50,000 - Above	0	0	
TOTAL		456	301	66%

Number (N) and Percentage (%) of School Media Specialists (SMS) Responding According to Average Daily Membership (ADM) by School Districts

ADM	Number SMS Surveyed	Number SMS Responded	Percent-to-Total (%)
Under - 2,500	67	43	64%
2,500 - 9,999	96	64	66%
10,000 - 24,999	211	144	70%
25,000 - 49,999	58	36	62%
50,000 - Above	24	14	58%
TOTAL (N)	456	301	

Table 2

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL MEDIA SPECIALISTS (SMS) . . .

1. Surveyed by States
2. Responded by States

State (A)	Number SMS Surveyed (B)	Percent-to-Total of SMS (C)	Number SMS Responding (D)	Percent-to-Total SMS Responding by States (E)	Differences in Percent (Column C-E) (F)
Florida	100	22%	72	24%	+2%
Georgia	97	21%	62	22%	+1%
Alabama	79	17%	58	16%	-1%
South Carolina	56	12%	36	12%	-0-
Tennessee	67	15%	44	15%	-0-
Mississippi	57	12%	29	10%	-2%
TOTAL	456	99%*	301	99%	

*When rounded off

Table 3

NUMBER OF OPERATING LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY STATES, TOTAL ENROLLMENT, AND NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

State	Number of Operating Public School Systems*	Total Pupils Enrolled**	Number of Schools*
Florida	67	1,514,359	1,866
Georgia	188	1,090,280	1,803
Tennessee	93	891,775	1,789
Alabama	123	783,383	1,504
South Carolina	147	623,778	1,182
Mississippi	150	526,366	856

*Williams, J. W. and Sallie L. Warf. Education Directory 1972-73 Public School Systems. DHEW Publication, No. (OE) 73-11701. P. XVI.

**The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1974 ed., New York, New York. Newspaper Enterprise Association. P. 316.

Table 4

OPINIONNAIRE

___ ___ ___

1. Is your library media center located in a centralized location that is convenient for teacher and student users?

   Yes ___
   No ___

2. Please list a major problem that you feel is a hinderance to the effectiveness of your library media center's programs and services.

   _____

   _____

3. What percent of your time would you estimate is taken up in those tasks which you do not consider a part of your center's program and services (please estimate in percentage)? _____

4. Have you, or your school district, implemented a plan for the training of teachers to more effectively use nonprint materials in their instruction?

   Yes ___
   No ___
   Not Sure ___

5. Are you involved in an inservice training program to assist teachers to more effectively use nonprint materials?

   Yes ___
   No ___

   If "no", please check the following item which best explains your "no" response:

   Responsibility for training is another's responsibility __
   Not enough time in my schedule __
   No administrative support __
   No personnel to assist and support me in this effort __
   Do not feel qualified __
   Lack of teachers' interest __
   Not sufficient facilities, equipment, or space __
   Other (please explain in a few words) _____

   _____

6. Are provisions made for teachers to produce and design new materials for their instructional use?

   Yes ___
   No ___

7. What percentage of your student body would you estimate uses your center at least 30 minutes a week? (Estimate in a percentage as close as you can). ____

8. What percentage of your teachers would you estimate uses or visits your center at least 30 minutes a week? (Estimate in a percentage as close as you can). ____

9. Do you feel that you have an adequate supply of audio-visual equipment to use as recommended by the Standards for School Media Programs? (Please check the most appropriate item).

   Yes ___
   No ___
   Undecided ___
   Am unfamiliar with the Standards ___

10. What percent of the teachers in your school use the nonprint resources and the accompanying hardware? (As close as you are able, indicate a percentage). ___

11. Do you feel that the attitude of your school's administrator toward your library media center is: (Check (✓) one).

    Good ___
    Satisfactory ___
    Poor ___

12. Do you feel that all prospective teachers, administrators and other educational personnel should have some form of training in information handling before completing their academic requirements?

    Yes ___
    No ___
    No opinion ___

13. To what degree have you provided input about the functions and operation of your center's programs and services to your school administrator? (Check (✓) one).

    Much input ___
    Some input ___
    Little input ___

14. Considering the use of your time in a single month's period, what percent of time would you estimate you spend in helping teachers plan for instruction? (Estimate in terms of a percent as close as you can). ____

15. What three (3) departments in your school use the programs and services of your library media center? (List the three (3) by priority).

    _____
    _____
    _____

16. Do you offer orientation sessions for students on the use of your center?

Yes ___
No ___

If your answer is "no", please state your major reason on the line(s) below:

_____

_____

17. Is your center used for study hall purposes?

Yes ___
No ___